

Tests that are too short: A test is too short if it is less than 7 minutes 30 seconds (this includes a 30 second tolerance) from when the teacher starts reading the first question. In fairness to all candidates, tests which are too short cannot be deemed to demonstrate the full requirements of the mark grids for Accuracy and Spontaneity and Development.

The procedure followed is:

If, for example, a candidate were deemed to have scored 10 for Spontaneity and Development based on performance in an oral which is too short, then the corresponding mark in the band immediately below would be awarded to reflect this reduced length. In this case the candidate would be awarded 6.

The same procedure would be followed for Accuracy.

Tests that are too long: Once the 10 minute mark has passed, the examiner stops listening at the end of the next sentence/sense group.

Spontaneity

To access a mark band of 9 or above candidates must demonstrate many examples of spontaneous responses to questions.

‘Many’ implies that spontaneity is a clear characteristic of the test.

Spontaneity occurs when candidates use their knowledge of structures and lexis and apply it appropriately in response to unpredictable, but not unfamiliar, questions.

The unpredictability is created by the TE responding to the candidates’ views to elicit development. Unpredictability on the part of the TE will facilitate an appropriate level of spontaneity.

Fluent discourse refers to a natural conversation within the context of an assessment

Development

Development means appropriately expanding on an idea and point of view. This can be in the form of justification, illustration, exemplification, clarification, comparison of the candidates’ ideas and views.

Understanding (Stimulus specific)

This grid is used only to mark Section A of the oral test. If a candidate fails to answer questions 1 and 2 appropriately, but successfully answers questions 3 and/or 4, examiners will seek to credit the candidate’s understanding of the wider implications of the text.

Understanding (General topic area)

This grid is used only to mark Section B of the oral test.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the GTA and express ideas and opinions which are supported by evidence from their research.

Candidates who are not given the opportunity to engage in a discussion which moves away from the main focus and sub-topic presented on the stimulus card, will not provide the necessary evidence to achieve marks in this grid.

Repeated ideas and simplistic points based on general knowledge would not meet the requirements of 7 or above.

In order to achieve marks of 7 or above candidates must demonstrate evidence of research.